

WASHINGTON TIMES
FEBRUARY 16, 1983,
PAGE 1C.

BUI ANH TUAN

Castro's narcotics trade

Four close aides to Fidel Castro, including two influential members of the Central Committee of Cuba's Communist Party, were indicted recently on federal charges of smuggling narcotics into the United States. The report caused indignation, but not surprise, because as Florida Sen. Paula Hawkins, whose people "have been the target of Castro's aggression for many years," put it — this was "but the last of a long list of actions by the communist dictator, which include the illegal shipment of criminals and mental cases to our shores."

As chairman of the Senate Drug Enforcement Caucus, Hawkins has called on President Reagan to conduct a "reassessment of U.S.-

"Castro's involvement in the narcotics trade is no accident.

Communist leaders throughout the world use all kinds of illegal and inhuman business to finance the destruction of capitalism."

Cuban relations." Such reassessment is all the more urgent since propagandists and apologists in the media and on Capitol Hill have begun reactivating the "normalization of relations" ploy.

Is it time to lift the U.S. economic embargo and reestablish full diplomatic relations with Havana? Well, before answering that question, let's consider the case of Chang Chi-fu, the notorious drug trafficker in the Golden Triangle, an area with forests and mountains bordering on Thailand, Burma and China's southern province of Yunnan. The Thai government has posted a \$25,000 reward for Chang's capture. The United States has encouraged Southeast Asian countries to step up

enforcement activities, eradicate poppy crops, restrict the availability of acetic anhydride, a chemical used to process heroin, and destroy clandestine "heroin refineries."

To a certain extent, Castro is a Latin American Chang Chi-fu. What's more, the drug syndicate of which he is the kingpin, is many times more powerful than the gang of armed outlaws, who call themselves Shan United Army, in the Golden Triangle. Thus, it is contrary to American ethics to seek obliteration of a Southeast Asian contrabandist while embracing the No. 1 drug trafficker in the Western Hemisphere.

To be exact, Castro's involvement in the narcotics trade is no accident. Communist leaders throughout the world use all kinds of illegal and inhuman business to finance the destruction of capitalism. Their tactic is very simple: Whenever their con game is exposed, they loudly claim that their conscience is clear, and pin the blame on "U.S. imperialism."

There is irrefutable evidence that Castro's navy was behind the transportation of at least 5 million methaqualone tablets and 1,000 pounds of marijuana to Florida. That has not prevented Cuban officials from retorting that the whole affair was a CIA fabrication.

A North Korean ambassador to Norway and Sweden was expelled in the wake of a huge smuggling racket involving liquor, cigarettes and marijuana. Interpol documents showed that all North Korean diplomatic installations in Northern Europe, especially in Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm, served as smuggling centers. But the North Koreans kept saying they were slandered, and the diplomat-contrabandist was promoted to a higher position — that of foreign affairs vice minister.

Six years ago, communist Vietnam made public the initial results of an "investigation into war crimes committed by American imperialists and their puppets." The United States was charged with a dozen crimes, including that of narcotics trafficking. The truth is that during the Vietnam war, most illicit drugs sold and used in the south were supplied by traffickers having ties to the Hanoi intelligence service.

China was a major supplier, too. Mengku Hsiaohsi, a pro-Soviet Chinese language newspaper in Mongolia, once accused Peking of operating heroin refineries in southern China, and of planting poppies in state farms in Yunnan, Kwangsi and Kweichow provinces.

Due to the competition between communist traffickers, the flow of illicit drugs has not abated. Their sales in the United States have exceeded \$80 billion a year. The Reagan administration has launched a major effort to stop the drug flow. Another spectacular effort is sorely needed to find out how much of this \$80 billion is being used to keep Americans in a state of political narcolepsy.

